

### III. FACILITATING ACCESS TO SELF-SERVICES

The One-Stop Centers in this study indicated that their goal was to design a Resource Room that was accessible, user-friendly, comfortable, and responsive to customer needs. Centers also stressed that they seek to empower job seeker customers to direct their own job search. However, in order to encourage customers to adopt a self-directed approach to utilizing services and resources, Centers have recognized the importance of facilitating access to self-services. Thus, in addition to designing physical facilities that promote access to self-services, which we discuss in Chapter II, and providing a broad array of self-services tools and resources that meets customer needs, which is discussed in Chapter V, One-Stop Centers have found that a key component of building a solid self-service system is designing mechanisms that help facilitate access to self-services.

This chapter explores a variety of strategies used by the Centers in this study to facilitate access to self-services. Consistent with the theme of promoting universal access to services, Centers have developed marketing efforts to attract customers into the Resource Room. Once customers enter the Resource Room, however, there must also be mechanisms in place that help them navigate the array of self-service tools and resources that are available. Centers have also discovered that customers benefit from more detailed guidelines for using specific self-services, such as instructions for accessing job search information on the Internet.

In attempting to promote access for a diverse range of customers, Centers have also made accommodations to meet the unique needs of certain customer groups. In this chapter we discuss efforts that Centers in this study have developed to promote access to the Resource Room among five different population groups: individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited computer skills, participants in welfare-to-work programs, youth customers, and non-native English speakers. A few Centers have also sought to promote access to self-services by providing opportunities for customers to access services remotely. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of strategies

*Building an effective Resource Room requires that provisions be made to facilitate access. This can entail marketing of Center services, providing staff assistance, being responsive to customers with special needs, and providing remote access*

to document the performance of the self-service system.

### **ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS TO THE RESOURCE ROOM**

Traditionally, public workforce development and labor exchange systems have been perceived as serving primarily entry-level and hourly workers and their employers. However, the Centers in this study, like most One-Stop systems, expressed a desire to attract a diverse range of job seekers and employer customers, including both large and small employers and workers with a wide range of formal education and skills. As a result, One-Stop Centers have had to develop marketing and outreach mechanisms to attract an expanded customer base.

*Centers need to consciously devise strategies to recruit a diverse range of customers.*

In an effort to attract customers to the Resource Room, One-Stop systems have rarely marketed self-services as a stand-alone feature. Rather, at the local level, most sites advertise the range of services provided at the Center, including self, assisted, and intensive services. Many Centers also offer a broad array of assisted services at no cost to universal customers, such as workshops or individual meetings with a career counselor, and tend to market these services jointly with the self-services available in the Resource Room. Also helpful, however, are statewide marketing campaigns focused on particular self-service resources. For example, many states have developed brochures promoting the state One-Stop Internet web page or the state Job Bank.

This section provides a discussion of marketing efforts to attract individual job seekers and employers to the Resource Room.

#### **Attracting Individual Job Seekers**

Centers conducted two broad types of outreach to attract individual job seekers: (1) marketing to the general public, and (2) outreach to targeted populations.

**Marketing to the General Public.** As Centers have increasingly tried to attract a broad range of customers to utilize self-services and other resources available to universal customers, they have had to develop new marketing strategies geared toward the general public. Although some Centers rely largely upon “word of mouth” marketing to increase general public awareness of the One-Stop system, a couple of the One-Stop Centers in this study have conducted elaborate, aggressive marketing such as television and newspaper advertisements. Different approaches that Centers used to

reach a broad range of potential customers included the following:

- *Advertisements in public media.* Two Centers have placed advertisements in public media such as newspaper or television. The Workforce Development Center in *Racine, Wisconsin* has advertised its Orientation workshop in the local newspaper and television stations. In addition, the Sunday newspaper contains a listing of all workshops that will be held at the Center during the upcoming week.
- *Internet web page.* The web page for a local One-Stop system often provides general information about services and programs. In *Brevard County, Florida*, for example, the web page for Brevard Job Link includes a description of the services and resources available through the local One-Stop system, a list of Center locations, and links to several resources, such as job listings and labor market information.
- *Kiosks.* Some states or local systems have installed kiosks in central community locations such as public libraries or shopping malls that provide general information about the One-Stop system. In some cases kiosks also provide direct access to self-services such as job listings. In *Vermont*, the state Department of Employment and Training (DET) has installed several kiosks in highly visible areas such as shopping malls. The kiosks have a touchscreen and a voice prompt system that provide information on the mission of DET, job listings, labor market information, services for job seekers, services for employers, and UI services.
- *Brochures.* Most Centers have developed brochures that describe the array of services, resources, and programs accessible through the One-Stop system.
- *Videos.* A few Centers, including the Workforce Development Center in *Racine, Wisconsin*, have developed videos designed to promote the local One-Stop system to job seekers and employers.
- *Job Fairs.* Several Centers indicate they attract job seekers by participating in local job fairs. Staff from the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center in southern *Austin, Texas* regularly attend job fairs and distribute promotional items including brochures, pens, and key chains with the Center's address and logo.

*Broad-based marketing approaches have included media ads, kiosks, videos, and participation in Job Fairs.*

*Sample pages from Brevard's Job Link web site are included in Appendix D.*

Some Centers have been reluctant to conduct broad-scale

marketing efforts, however, sometimes out of fear that the Center does not currently have the capacity to adequately serve a larger customer base or because the local One-Stop system is still evolving. Since these Centers typically rely on informal “word of mouth” marketing and referrals from partner agencies to attract customers to the Resource Room, they tend to serve a high percentage of customers eligible for specialized programs. At a couple of Centers, job seekers that had heard about the local One-Stop through “word of mouth” expressed high praise for the One-Stop Center, but were frustrated that the Center’s services were not more broadly advertised. As sites move ahead with implementation of the Workforce Investment Act, marketing efforts geared toward the general public may increase, since additional funding should be available to provide services for universal customers.

*Referrals from partner agencies and “word of mouth” are among the most commonly cited recruitment methods.*

**Marketing and Outreach to Targeted Populations.** All of the Centers in this study conduct some form of outreach to attract individuals from certain population groups into the Resource Room. Most Centers have established referral linkages or co-location agreements to encourage participants in specialized programs—such as dislocated worker, welfare-to-work or vocational rehabilitation programs—to use the resources and tools available in the Resource Room. Centers have also attempted to attract individuals from certain population groups, such as youth customers, by arranging special tours or presentations. In some cases, these outreach efforts are undertaken to help counteract a perception that the One-Stop Center is not really designed for universal access. For example, one Center has been perceived as primarily serving a more highly educated, professional customer base, and has had to work closely with local agencies to attract participants in welfare-to-work programs.

*Outreach targeted to specific population groups has included conducting tours, using targeted mailings, linking with other organizations, and using the Center as a community meeting space.*

Centers used the following approaches to attract customers from targeted groups to the Resource Room:

- *Referral linkages with One-Stop partners.* Most of the Centers in this study have established strong referral linkages with One-Stop partner agencies. Program participants are especially likely to utilize the Resource Room when program staff members are co-located at the One-Stop Center.
- *Linkages with other systems or community-based organizations.* Some Centers have established

linkages with other workforce development systems, such as school-to-work, or with community based organizations. For example, in *Anoka, MN*, the Workforce Center is the administrative entity for the county's school-to-work initiative.

- *Presentations.* One-Stop staff may make presentations at local schools or community organizations to increase awareness of the Center.
- *Targeted mailings.* In *Austin, TX* mailings have been generated from the Center's database system. For example, the Center recently produced a bulk mailing for customers over 55, alerting them to community resources for senior citizens and reminding them about services and resources available at the Center.
- *Tours.* Many Centers organize special tours for certain groups such as youth or participants in welfare-to-work programs.
- *Serving as a community meeting space.* Some Centers attract customers to the Resource Room by serving as a community meeting space. In *Racine, Wisconsin*, for example, the Workforce Development Center hosts ESL courses several evenings during the week.

#### **Marketing Efforts to Attract Job Seekers to One-Stop Centers**

The *Workforce Development Center (WDC)* in *Racine, WI* has advertised its Orientation Workshop on local television stations and in the newspaper. The Sunday newspaper contains a complete listing of all workshops that will take place at the WDC during the upcoming week. The WDC also attracts customers by serving as a community meeting place. Each month, for example, the WDC hosts blood pressure screenings for the community. Outreach efforts geared toward specific populations include tours for high school students. The Center also offers ESL and Citizenship classes, which also serve to increase awareness of Center services.

The *Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South)* in *Austin, TX* has advertised the Center through public service announcements on local television stations and by distributing brochures and items such as key chains and pens bearing the Center's logo and address. The Center also conducts outreach efforts targeting specific populations. Participants in a local program to assist offenders with reintegration into the community receive a brochure and are referred to the Center for job search assistance. Center staff members regularly give presentations on the Center in local schools and community centers.

### **Attracting Employer Customers to the One-Stop Center**

Employers rarely ‘flow’ into One-Stop Centers with the same frequency as individual job seekers, as we discuss further in Chapter VI. To the extent that employers utilize self-access services, including state and national web sites such as America’s Job Bank and America’s Talent Bank, or database systems with labor market information, these resources are often accessed using an Internet connection from their own office rather than visiting a One-Stop Center. When employers do visit Centers it is typically to conduct recruiting sessions in the Resource Room or as a guest speaker at “Meet the Employer” sessions, both of which might be construed as “self-service” activities.

Across the eight Centers in this study, approaches used to attract employers to the One-Stop Center included the following:

- *Recruitment sessions.* Several Centers have linkages with employers that regularly use the One-Stop Center as a recruiting site.
- *“Meet the Employer” sessions.* In *Renton, Washington*, the weekly “Job Seekers’ Exchange” workshop has become quite popular among job seekers and local employers. Local employers are invited to speak about job search strategies, such as interviewing skills and resume tips. Employer customers often attend these sessions, even when they are not featured as a guest speaker, in order to conduct informal recruiting activities.
- *Workshops for employers.* The Workforce Development Center in *Racine, Wisconsin* offers a variety of seminars for employer customers on topics such as recruitment, strategic planning, and diversity in the workplace.
- *Employer Resource Rooms.* In *Bloomington, Indiana*, the Workforce Development Center plans to develop a separate Employer Information Resource Area adjacent to the Job Seeker Information Resource Area, which may increase the flow of employer customers into the Center.

*Familiarizing employers with Center services requires special efforts. These have included “Meet the Employer” Sessions, workshops for employers, and Resource Rooms designated specifically for employers’ use.*

### **ORIENTING CUSTOMERS TO THE SELF-SERVICE SYSTEM**

Although self-access services are designed to be utilized independently, most of the Centers in this study emphasized that one of the key lessons they learned was the importance of providing customers with an orientation to the Resource Room and guidance around using

self-services. Respondents at the local and state levels indicated that they initially believed that a majority of customers would access self-services on their own—self-services was viewed as a stand-alone feature requiring little staff assistance. One Center manager commented that during the planning and initial implementation phases, One-Stop partners adopted a mindset of “if we build it, customers will use it.” Over time, however, most Centers have discovered that a high degree of customer service, as well as outreach, must be provided to facilitate utilization of self-services.

*Once they enter the Resource Room, customers need guidance on the available resources and tools.*

Thus, several Centers in this study have consistently increased the number of customer service staff available to assist customers in the Resource Room. These staff members ensure that customers effectively utilize self-services through individualized assistance or group workshops. The sentiment that “self-services is a misnomer,” was echoed by virtually all of the Centers included in this study. According to staff members of the Career Development Center in Renton, Washington, “we quickly learned that a beautiful facility with state-of-the-art technology will be under-utilized without staff available to assist customers. If people feel intimidated or don’t see that help is readily available, they won’t use the self-service features.” Our observations confirmed this. During our visits to the Resource Rooms, we routinely witnessed customers requesting staff assistance. Because the individuals using the Resource Room have varying levels of comfort, experience, and expertise with the tools and resources available, providing staff assistance and other mechanisms to orient customers to self-services is critical.

*Centers in our study have learned that providing some staff assistance is essential to making the self-service resources accessible to customers.*

*“We quickly learned that a beautiful facility... will be under-utilized without staff ...to assist customers.”  
— a Center administrator*

In this section we discuss the variety of mechanisms Centers use to provide customers with an orientation to the One-Stop Center and to specific self-services.

### **Orienting Customers to the Center**

Once individuals enter the One-Stop Center, sites varied as to how they provide customers with an orientation. Most Centers have designated “Greeters” who welcome visitors and request that they sign-in using a hard-copy or computer registry. Some Centers offer a tour of the One-Stop to all new customers when they first arrive—either a brief overview of the Resource Room and services available, or, in some cases, an extensive private orientation to the One-Stop Center. Some Centers offer an orientation workshop once or twice each week,

*“Self services is a misnomer. Users need assistance.”  
— a Center administrator*

but often give new customers a brief tour of the facility and encourage them to attend the orientation session.

Centers used a variety of mechanisms to orient customers to the Resource Room and varied significantly in the amount of resources they devoted to customer service. Their strategies included:

- *General orientation workshops* held at scheduled times once or twice each week. These orientation workshops typically include a tour of the Resource Room and other self-service areas and an overview of the different services available to customers—self, assisted, and specialized services. Some Centers also provide an extensive tour to all new customers on an individual basis.
- *Appropriate signage.* Clear, visible signage directs customers to the location of resources—books, computer programs, Internet access, labor market information, terminals with state job listings. This is particularly important when all of the computers do not have the same assortment of programs on the desktop. The Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* has two separate banks of computers, with large blue signs attached to the ceiling identifying the resources that can be accessed. One section has seventeen computers for “resume, cover letter writing, career information and keyboard training,” while another section has eleven computers with “job listings.”
- *Brochures, floor plans, or information flyers* describing services and resources available at the Center. For example, Centers with multiple self-service areas, such as a separate Resource Library and computer area, generally include a map of the self-service areas to help acquaint customers with the resources available to universal customers at various locations within the Center.
- *Registration kiosks* usually provide customers with general information about One-Stop services—self, guided, and intensive—and how they can access those services and resources.
- *A video* that introduces customers to the One-Stop concept and the services available to universal customers. In *Brevard County, Florida*, the weekly orientation session at the Melbourne Job Link Center concludes with a twelve-minute video describing Job Link and the services and resources available.
- *Television monitors* that continuously scroll a list of

*Many Centers use Greeters to provide an introduction to the Center; others hold general orientation workshops a few times a week.*

*Clear signage is also an essential tool for orienting customers to what is available.*



services, resources, or events at the One-Stop Center. For example, in *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Workforce Center has a 26-inch monitor that continuously scrolls the resources available in the Resource Center in large typeface.

- *An Internet Web page* for the local One-Stop Center sometimes includes a basic description of the type of services and resources available, along with links to specific self-services.

*Information kiosks or television monitors in the reception area are useful in providing a quick introduction to Center services. Internet web pages can also provide a good overview. For an example, see sample pages from Brevard's Job Link web page, in Appendix D.*

### **Examples of Orienting Customers to One-Stop Resources**

At the *Workforce Center* in *Anoka, Minnesota*, a Greeter welcomes customers and requests that they sign-in. To familiarize new customers with the Center's resources and services, an *individualized tour*, lasting about an hour, is given by the Greeter, Resource Room technician, or program counselor, depending upon who is available at the time. While waiting for the orientation, customers may view a 26-inch *television monitor* located near the entrance that scrolls the specific services and resources available at the Center. A large *bulletin board* is also located near the entrance, with a monthly calendar of upcoming events, a diagram of the Center indicating the location of particular resources, and announcements regarding workshops and services. A *brochure* describing the self-services, workshops, and intensive services available at the Center also includes a map of the Center and lists the names and telephone numbers of staff of particular programs. A *monthly calendar* of workshops and recruitment sessions is also available. Finally, a more *intensive, two-day orientation* to the Resource Room, required for participants in certain programs, is also open to universal customers.

*The Work Place (TWP)* in *Boston, Massachusetts* has instituted a membership system using swipe cards with a bar code. TWP has several receptionists that greet customers, encourage new customers to complete a membership application, and give *brief tours* of the Center. New customers view an eight-minute, closed-captioned *orientation video* with general information about services available to universal customers at no cost as well as fee-based services. The video is available in several languages, including Mandarin, Vietnamese, French, and Spanish. Customers can learn about guided-services, such as workshops on self-services, through *informational flyers* displayed throughout the Center or from TWP's *web page*.

### **Additional Examples of Orienting Customers**

The *Workforce Development Center (WDC)* in *Racine, Wisconsin* has developed several mechanisms to orient customers to the range of services available. At the entrance to the WDC are three touch-screen *registration kiosks* that provide customers with basic information about the Center's services and resources. The kiosks have English and Spanish templates, and can be accessed through a voice prompt or touch screen format. By entering their social security number, customers can register for an appointment with a career counselor or for one of the WDC's many workshops—services that are available at no cost to universal customers. Customers can also register for services and obtain general information about the Center from Greeters at the *reception desk*. Each Monday the Center offers a *WDC Orientation Workshop*, a two-hour overview of self, guided, and specialized services available at the WDC and a tour of the self-services areas on the first floor. The WDC publishes a *monthly calendar* of workshops, as well as a *brochure* on the WDC that includes a map of the self-service areas.

### **Orienting Customers to Specific Self-Service Resources**

Once customers enter the Resource Room, what mechanisms exist to facilitate usage of particular self-services? While an orientation workshop, video, or brochure may furnish the customer with a general overview of self-service resources, customers may want more in-depth guidelines around accessing specific resources. For example, customers with little experience or comfort using computers may require detailed instructions or staff assistance using particular resources, such as a resume writing program or an electronic assessment and career exploration program. While resources and tools are discussed further in Chapter V, in this section we discuss the different strategies adopted by One-Stop Centers to orient customers to specific self-service resources.

Most Centers have developed a variety of mechanisms to help customers navigate particular self-service resources. This assistance might include print materials, workshops on using specific software, Internet "bookmarks" that direct customers to job search web sites, or even something as simple as a list of different programs available at a computer work station. In addition, most Centers also provide customer service staff in the Resource Room on a full-time basis. In this regard, self-services were rarely viewed as a stand-alone feature.

*Customers need an orientation not only to the Center as a whole, but to specific resources and tools.*

*Mechanisms to orient job seekers can include print materials, Internet "bookmarks," workshops, computer tutorials, and staff assistance.*

**Print Materials.** Many Centers have developed print materials to help orient customers to specific self-services. For example, the Career Development Center in *Renton, Washington* has developed three different informational flyers pertaining to preparing and sending an electronic resume. In *Boston, Massachusetts*, The Work Place has prepared informational flyers with step-by-step instructions on “how to save text from an Internet web page,” “how to save a document on diskette,” and other topics. These print materials help simplify access to self-services by providing customers with clear instructions or guidelines. In contrast, several Centers do not offer written instructions for accessing resume writing or career exploration and assessment programs, which may help explain why they have had to provide extensive staff assistance to customers using these programs.

**Internet “bookmarks.”** While the Internet contains a wide variety of resources and information to assist job seekers, One-Stop customers could easily feel overwhelmed trying to track down helpful information and may spend significant amounts of time “spinning their wheels” while “surfing” the Internet. To help guide customers to noteworthy web sites on the Internet, several Centers have created Internet “bookmarks.” This generally requires that staff conduct research to discover helpful web sites at the local, state, and national levels. In *Renton, Washington*, the Career Development Center has created almost one hundred Internet “bookmarks,” categorized under different topic areas such as “best bets” and “Washington State resources.” Customers can obtain a hard-copy list of these web sites in an annotated bibliography format, with brief descriptions of each web site.

*The Career Development Center in Renton WA has developed an annotated list of Internet bookmarks. See the Resource List in Appendix D for excerpts.*

**Workshops.** As a form of assisted or guided services, many Centers have developed workshops that enable customers to gain a deeper understanding of particular self-services, such as the Internet or a resume writing program. All of the Centers in this study offer a variety of workshops that are open to universal customers. However, Centers did vary considerably regarding the extent to which the content of workshops focuses on self-services. Half of the Centers in this study offer at least three workshops that provide universal customers with guidance around using self-services. The following workshops were offered by at least two of the eight Centers in this study:

*Free, open-access workshops are given in many Centers on a range of topics, including how to use the Internet, job search strategies, and career exploration.*

- Using the Internet as a job search tool.

- Job search strategies, including information on accessing labor market information and step-by-step instructions on registering for the state Job Service database.
- Resume workshops, which often walk customers through the process of creating a resume using a template program such as *WinWay*.
- Career exploration workshop, including orientation to electronic career exploration and self-assessment programs such as *Sigi Plus* or *Choices*.

*When asked to assess their experiences in the Resource Room, customers in one focus group responded that “the staff is great.”*

**Staff Assistance.** The extent to which Centers provide customer service staff available to assist customers in the Resource Room depended upon several factors, including the size of the Center, the degree of customer traffic in the Resource Room, and funding and partnership arrangements. In addition, Centers have different visions around what types of staffing arrangements are appropriate for a self-service environment. One Center in our study did not have staff members in the Resource Room whose primary duties included assisting customers. At the other end of the spectrum, one Center provides two chairs at each computer workstation in order to emphasize that staff members are available to assist customers. Most Centers in this study fall in the middle of this continuum, and have designated staff workstations within the Resource Room, such as a “Help Desk,” so that customers know that staff are available to provide assistance.

*Brevard FL’s Workplace Organizer is available at each computer workstation to provide customers with guidance on using each software package. See the Resources List in Appendix B for information about this.*

**Guide to computer programs.** To help orient customers to the many different computer programs available in the Resource Room, some Centers have developed hard-copy resources that guide customers through specific programs. In *Renton, Washington*, the Career Development Center offers a three-page flyer describing the computer resources available at the Center—Internet access, the state Job bank, Microsoft software programs, self-assessment software, and computer tutorials. In *Brevard County, Florida* the Job Link system has developed a “Workforce Organizer”—a white binder placed at each computer station that provides customers with guidance around using different self-service resources, such as the Internet, job listings, and resume writing programs.

*Resource Room users who are novices in the use of computers will need computer tutorials.*

**Computer tutorials or computer courses.** Some Centers have made arrangements to provide tutorials, workshops, videos, or courses

in basic computer usage for customers with little computer experience. This allows customers to develop the requisite computer skills to fully access electronic self-services.

### **PROMOTING UNIVERSAL ACCESS FOR A DIVERSE RANGE OF CUSTOMERS**

While Centers need to conduct outreach to attract customers to their doors and need to provide orientation and staff assistance to make the resources accessible, they also have found that they need to make other accommodations to meet the special needs many customers have. For example, in contrast to older-style UI/ES offices that focus on the needs of unemployed job seekers, customers in the new workforce development environment will include those who are already employed in a 9 to 5 job, but who are looking to secure a better position. These individuals will not be well served by Centers that adhere to regular business office hours. Similarly, some customers will be parents of young children with child-care constraints; others will have limited English proficiency; and so on.

Centers have devised a variety of strategies to meet these needs:

- *Extended hours.* Three of the eight Centers included in this study have extended hours during evenings or weekends to facilitate access to self-services for customers that cannot visit the Center during normal business hours. Many other Centers are also considering offering extended hours.
- *On-site child care.* One Center has a child play area with a full-time staff person that is available to universal customers (this is not a licensed child care facility, however). Three other sites have a designated child play area without staff supervision or provide childcare for customers enrolled in specialized programs.
- *Customer service.* As discussed above in the section on “Orienting Customers to the Self-Service system,” most Centers have found that providing a high degree of customer service—particularly having staff members in the Resource Room—is critical to facilitating usage of self-services.
- *Effective, efficient design of Resource Room.* As discussed in Chapter II, some Centers have modified the design of the Resource Room in order to improve access to self-services.

*Accommodations also need to be made for special populations, such as extended hours for those working during the day and on-site child care for job seekers who are parents.*

*Usage can also be promoted if Centers design Resource Room tools and resources effectively. The Handbook of Usability Principles and Design Principles for Resource Center Development both can be invaluable tools in this effort. See the Resource List in the Appendix for further details.*

While Centers make these accommodations to serve a diverse range of customers in their Resource Room, many have also focused on conducting special outreach efforts to one or two unique population groups, such as youth customers or participants in welfare-to-work programs. In many instances, special outreach was spurred by state policy that encourages or mandates that One-Stop Centers take steps to promote access among special population groups. For example, state welfare reform legislation may stipulate that participants in welfare-to-work programs should conduct job search efforts in One-Stop Centers. Similarly, a few statewide initiatives attempt to promote access to One-Stop Centers among individuals with disabilities.

As we discuss further in this section, then, Centers have adopted a variety of approaches to promote access to the Resource Room among individuals from population groups with significant barriers to employment.

- *Most Centers provide some accommodations to promote access to self-services among individuals with disabilities.* Several Centers provide adaptive equipment that enables customers with hearing, vision, or mobility impairments to access self-service resources. (However, Centers with assistive technology often report that this equipment is rarely used.)
- *Ensuring that individuals with low basic skills, particularly low computer skills, have access to self-services represents a significant challenge for the One-Stop system.* Most of the One-Stop Centers in this study serve a predominantly high-skilled, highly-educated group of customers such as dislocated workers. Serving less educated groups will require special efforts.
- *Participants in welfare-to-work programs* often receive a customized orientation to the Resource Room. In some states, welfare-to-work participants are required to utilize One-Stop Centers as part of their job search activities.
- A few Centers conduct outreach efforts or tailor services to attract *youth customers*.
- *Promoting access among non-native English speakers represents a significant challenge.* The most common efforts to improve access for non-native English speakers have been to make some of the orientation

*Additional provisions may be necessary to accommodate*

- *Customers with disabilities*
- *Those with weak basic skills or limited computer literacy*
- *Public assistance recipients*
- *Youth*
- *Limited-English speakers*

materials available in multiple languages.

### **Individuals with Disabilities**

A majority of the One-Stop Centers included in this study have attempted to promote access to self-services among individuals with disabilities. The most extensive efforts include the provision of adaptive equipment and strong referral or co-location linkages with organizations serving the disability community. At a minimum, Centers ensure that they meet basic requirements outlined in the ADA regarding physical access and also offer some type of adaptive equipment such as a TDD (telecommunications device for the deaf) or text enlargement software for customers with visual impairments.

In some cases, statewide initiatives have required or encouraged Centers to take steps to promote access to One-Stop services among individuals with disabilities. In *Vermont*, the Vermont Assistive Technology Project used funding from the U.S. Department of Education to promote system changes by purchasing and installing a variety of assistive technology at each of the twelve One-Stop Centers in the state. This equipment addresses three types of disabilities— hearing, visual, and mobility impairments. In *Wisconsin*, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is researching various technologies that enable individuals with disabilities to access the state's JobNet system. DWD has developed workstations equipped with a variety of adaptive technology. A liaison at DWD serves as an advisor to One-Stop Centers regarding equipment, layout, and staffing for these special JobNet workstations. In *Texas*, the One-Stop certification process includes some items related to making services accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Across the eight sites included in this study, efforts to promote access to self-services among individuals with disabilities included the following strategies:

- *Making content of self-services relevant to individuals with disabilities* provides customers with information relevant to employment and disability. This might include the acquisition of books, periodicals, videos and other resources containing information on issues such as the ADA and Vocational Rehabilitation Act or how to discuss accommodation requirements with employers. In *Boston, Massachusetts*, The Work Place provides Internet "bookmarks" of websites that focus on disability issues. (In general, however,

*Many Centers go beyond being ADA compliant by making a range of assistive technology available. The Trace Research and Development Center at the Univ. of Wisconsin provides information about such tools. See the Resource List in the Appendix for contact information.*

*Centers can conduct a self-evaluation of their accommodations for meeting the needs of those with disabilities by consulting the One-Stop Disability Checklist, prepared by DOL. See the Resource List in Appendix for further details.*

ensuring that the *content* of self-service resources is relevant to individuals with disabilities was not a common practice at the Centers in this study.)

- *Providing resources in alternative formats* ensures that customers with disabilities have equal opportunity to access services. In *Indiana*, the state Department of Workforce Development has developed a workbook in Braille concerning skills that are needed in the workplace, which is available at the *Bloomington* Workforce Development Center. In *Renton, Washington*, staff members have made adjustments to some of the print materials to make them more accessible to customers with learning disabilities.
- *Having referral linkages* with Vocational Rehabilitation and community-based organizations serving the disability community increases customer flow to the One-Stop Center. Such linkages are strongest when formalized in MOUs and when staff members are co-located at the One-Stop Center. In *Morrisville, Vermont*, the Career Resources Center and Vocational Rehabilitation have established a cooperative agreement to provide services for DVR customers at the Center. The Workforce Development Center in *Bloomington, Indiana* has established a linkage with a shelter for individuals with developmental disabilities. A staff person from the shelter, the Job Coach, brings groups to the WDC and assists individuals using resources in the Center's Information Resource Area.
- *Staff assistance and orientation to self-services*, provided by staff or partners with a special knowledge of the needs of customers with disabilities, increases utilization of self-services among individuals with disabilities. In *Anoka, Minnesota*, eight counselors from the Department of Rehabilitative Services work in the same building as the Workforce Center and frequently bring customers to the Resource Center to assist them in using self-services. In *Renton, Washington*, a counselor from IAM CARES, an agency providing rehabilitation services, is co-located at the Career Development Center on a full-time basis and regularly assists customers in accessing self-services. Some Centers have arrangements so that staff providing rehabilitation services are available on an "on-call" basis.
- *Staff training on disability* increases awareness and sensitivity to the unique issues facing individuals with disabilities. In *Renton, Washington*, staff members of

*Efforts to promote access for those with disabilities have also included developing strong linkages with Voc Rehab, providing staff training on assistive technology, and promoting staff awareness.*



the Career Development Center receive periodic training about learning disabilities. In *Texas*, a representative from the Texas Workforce Commission held meetings with local One-Stop staff regarding accommodations and services for job seekers with disabilities.

- *Periodic review of the Center's services to customers with disabilities* provides the Center with an opportunity to evaluate current efforts to promote access to self-services and develop a plan to improve access. In *Renton, Washington*, the Career Development Center created a cross-functional team composed of management, case managers, and Resource Room staff to explore strategies to promote access to self-directed services. This team used the U.S. DOL One-Stop disability checklist to review accessibility issues.

In addition to the strategies discussed above, many Centers provide adaptive equipment or other accommodations designed to improve access to One-Stop services among individuals with one or more of the following disabilities:

- Visual impairments
- Hearing impairments
- Mobility impairments
- Cognitive or language impairments.

#### **Promoting Access for Customers with Physical Impairments.**

Although Centers in this study indicate that their building meets basic ADA requirements regarding physical accessibility, they also recognize that numerous accommodations could be made to improve access for customers with mobility impairments. At some Centers, the reception counter or registration desk was not accessible to persons using wheelchairs. In several instances, print materials on bookshelves or display racks were far too high to allow wheelchair access. These examples illustrate that the physical layout of the Resource Room may not allow customers with physical impairments to access self-services without special assistance. By contrast:

- In *Austin, Texas*, physical facility changes were made at the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) based upon the review and audit as part of the state's One-Stop certification process. The reception counter was lowered to accommodate customers in

wheelchairs. At the entrance to the building near the ramp, a doorbell is prominently displayed that rings the Center, for anyone needing assistance entering the building.

Several One-Stop Centers also offer adaptive equipment that enables customers with physical impairments to use electronic self-services. At the time of our site visits, three Centers had adjustable workstations to facilitate computer usage. Providing alternatives to computer keyboards, such as touch screen monitors, represents another strategy to improve access to electronic self-services.

- In *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Workforce Center has touch screen monitors available on some computers and customers can register with Job Service using a touch screen interface.
- At the Workforce Development Center in *Racine, Wisconsin*, customers can access the registration kiosk or the Wisconsin JobNet system using a touch screen monitor.

Additional types of adaptive equipment designed to promote access to computers for individuals with mobility impairments include a mouthpointer device and an eyegaze operated computer keyboard, but these two types of assistive equipment were not available at any of the Centers at the time of our site visits.

#### **Promoting Access for Customers with Hearing Impairments.**

Centers have attempted to promote utilization of self-services or guided services among individuals with hearing impairments through three mechanisms—adaptive equipment, closed-captioned videos, and sign language interpreters. Since many Centers offer group workshops and orientation tours, providing assistive listening systems or sign language interpreters ensures that individuals with hearing impairments have equal access to these services.

- *Adaptive equipment.* Centers have provided the following adaptive equipment for customers with hearing impairments.
  - *TTY/TDD* (telecommunications device for the deaf, sometimes called “text telephones”) were most commonly used to register for UI benefits or to register with the state job matching system. At the time of our site visits, six Centers had TTY or TDD telephone systems available. In *Morrisville, Vermont*,

hearing impaired customers at the Career Resources Center can use the TTY telephone system to inquire about a variety of services in the community.

- *FM systems.* An FM system is a type of assistive listening system designed to be used in large meeting rooms or auditoriums. This assistive listening system is available at the Career Resources Center in *Morrisville, Vermont*.
- *Closed captioned videos.* The Work Place in *Boston, Massachusetts* has an eight-minute, closed-captioned, orientation video that highlights services and resources available. In *Bloomington, Indiana*, the Workforce Development Center has job search videos that are closed-captioned.
- *Interpretive services.* A few Centers have made arrangements to provide sign language interpreters to assist customers in the Resource Room or during workshops. These services may be available immediately upon request or by appointment. In *Anoka, Minnesota*, all staff in the same building as the Workforce Center that speak American Sign Language (ASL) have been identified and are available on an “on-call” basis.

#### **Promoting Access for Customers with Visual Impairments.**

Some of the Centers in this study provide the following adaptive equipment designed to enable individuals with visual impairments to access electronic resources.

- *Zoom text software* enlarges text on a computer monitor. At the time of our visits, four Centers provided text enlargement software on some of the computers in the Resource Room.
- *17-inch monitors* can be adjusted to larger font sizes.
- *JAWS Software* provides voice read-out of whatever is activated on the computer screen. In *Austin, Texas*, customers with visual impairments at the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) can use this software to access a variety of resources, including the Internet.
- *A Braille printer* enables customers with visual impairments to access a variety of electronic resources. For example, in *Austin, Texas*, a customer might learn of a helpful Internet web site by using the JAWS software described above, and could then

obtain a printout with this information using the Braille printer.

**Promoting Access for Customers with Cognitive Impairments.** Providing accommodations enabling customers with cognitive impairments to utilize self-services represents perhaps the greatest challenge to promoting access among individuals with disabilities. Cognitive disabilities are categorized as memory, perception, problem solving, and conceptualizing disabilities. The type of cognitive impairment can vary widely—from severe retardation to a mild learning disability—and therefore the types of functional limitations also vary tremendously. Moreover, there are few assistive devices for people with cognitive impairments.

Very few Centers in this study provide accommodations or services designed to improve access to self-services among customers with cognitive impairments. In some cases, assistive equipment for individuals with visual impairments, such as screen enlargement or voice-read out software programs, may improve access for individuals with certain visual processing disabilities. As described in the example below, the Career Development Center in *Renton, Washington* is part of an initiative to promote greater utilization of One-Stop services among individuals with learning disabilities. The Learning Disabilities project includes training One-Stop staff to increase awareness of learning disabilities, developing accommodations for individuals with learning disabilities, and a “customer attached” rather than an “agency attached” case management system that cuts across programs and coordinates services for individuals with learning disabilities.

*In many of the Centers we visited, assistive technology is very infrequently utilized. By implication, Centers need to ensure that they involve the disability community in decision-making and have appropriate partnerships with Voc Rehab in place.*

**Designing Efforts to Promote Access for Individuals with Disabilities.** Five Centers in this study had rather extensive adaptive equipment, addressing at least two of the four types of disability discussed above. Yet at many of these sites, staff indicated that the equipment is rarely utilized. Because this equipment is often quite expensive, issues that should be addressed prior to acquiring adaptive technology include the following:

- Has the Center consulted with the disability community regarding best strategies to promote access to the One-Stop Center’s self-access services? Is providing adaptive equipment in the Resource Room the best strategy? If so, what types of equipment should be purchased?

- While assistive technology may promote access to self-services, can the local One-Stop system develop strategies to ensure that the *content* of tools and resources is relevant for individuals with disabilities?
- What arrangements need to be made so that program staff and Resource Room staff receive proper training on using adaptive equipment?
- What mechanisms will the Center develop to make sure that customers with disabilities are aware of the equipment that is available? How will the Center orient customers to this equipment?
- Does the Center have appropriate referral linkages with Vocational Rehabilitation and community agencies serving individuals with disabilities to ensure that self-service resources are utilized?

#### **Promoting Access to Self-Services Among Individuals with Disabilities**

As part of a statewide effort supported by the **Vermont Assistive Technology Project**, all twelve Career Resource Centers in Vermont received adaptive technology designed to promote access to One-Stop services among individuals with hearing impairments, visual impairments, or mobility impairments. This state initiative also included staff training on using the equipment. Like other Career Resource Centers across the state, the *Morrisville, Vermont Career Resources Center* offers the following adaptive equipment: adjustable work stations, 17-inch computer monitors, Zoom Text software, an FM system and a neckloop. In addition, all twelve Career Resource Centers have established a cooperative agreement with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to provide services to DVR customers. Staff members from DVR are co-located at many of the Centers once or twice each week to assist customers using self-directed services in the Resource Room.

At the *Career Development Center (CDC)* in *Renton, Washington*, one of the One-Stop partner agencies is IAM CARES (International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers' Center for Administering Rehabilitation and Employment Services), a national organization chartered to help people with disabilities obtain and keep jobs. IAM CARES provides job clubs and programs at the CDC for individual job seekers who meet certain eligibility criteria. An IAM CARES Counselor is co-located at the CDC full-time and frequently provides assistance to IAM CARES participants using self-directed service, such as Internet job search activities, resume development, and faxing

**Examples of Promoting Access Among Individuals with Disabilities (continued)**

resumes to employers. With respect to assistive equipment, the CDC has a TDD machine and some computer work stations with adjustable height. A cross-functional design team has been established to investigate additional accommodations that can be made to effectively improve access to the CDC's services for customers with disabilities.

The Renton CDC has also worked to improve access to the local One-Stop system among individuals with learning disabilities. The Seattle-King County Private Industry Council, which serves as the lead agency of the CDC, received a One-Stop system building grant from the U.S. DOL to promote greater utilization of One-Stop services among individuals with learning disabilities (LD). Staff members at the CDC have received training to increase awareness and sensitivity around learning disabilities, particularly to warning signs that may suggest an individual has a learning disability. One-Stop staff and program counselors refer individuals to the LD project for diagnostic testing. LD project staff work with case managers to determine what accommodations can be made to assist customers with disabilities, including accommodations that improve access to self-services.

*For Resource Rooms to be effective in serving lower-skilled job seekers, bridging the gap in computer literacy skills will be essential.*

**Individuals with Limited Computer Skills**

A great majority of self-services are electronic resources, such as software programs with resume templates, database systems with career exploration and labor market information, or electronic job listings on the Internet. As mentioned previously, most of the Resource Rooms in this study serve a predominantly high skilled, highly educated group of customers such as dislocated workers. These are the customers most able to utilize self-services in the Resource Room. A significant challenge facing One-Stop systems is ensuring that individuals with low computer skills have adequate access to electronic tools and resources.

While several states or local areas have undertaken initiatives to promote access to One-Stop services among certain targeted groups, such as those with disabilities or welfare-to-work participants (who may tend to have low computer skills), none of the states or local sites in this study have conducted extensive outreach and designed services to increase utilization of electronic self-services among individuals with low computer skills.

*Some Centers address problems in customers' computer literacy by offering free workshops or tutorials.*

Nonetheless, One-Stop Centers in this study have made some effort to assist customers in this group. These strategies generally cluster into two categories. Some efforts are geared toward helping individuals develop computer skills, thereby encouraging future utilization of electronic self-services and simultaneously helping job seekers gain an important employability skill. Other efforts instead focus on having staff essentially conduct 'self-services' on the customer's behalf, by preparing a resume, for example. Below we provide examples of these two types of strategies.

**Helping Customers Improve their Computer Skills.** Centers adopted the following strategies to help customers improve their computer skills:

- Providing workshops or courses on basic computer skills.
  - In *Boston*, The Work Place (TWP) offers several workshops geared toward novice computer users that are open to universal customers at no cost. *What is a Mouse?* is a one-hour workshop in which participants learn the key features of the computer system. *Introduction to Windows 95* is provided in two one-hour sessions and includes an introduction to Microsoft Word and Excel. *Hands-on Introduction to the Internet* is a one-hour workshop on using the Internet as a job search tool, designed for first-time Internet users. Finally, TWP offers a two-hour workshop called *How to Create a Resume* that includes instructions on using the WinWay software program to create a resume.
  - In *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Workforce Center offers an evening course in basic computer skills through one of the One-Stop partner agencies, Metro North. The course is taught on the third floor of the same building as the One-Stop Resource Room, located on the mezzanine level on the second floor, and is open to universal customers.
- Providing computer tutorials in the Resource Room. Three Centers offer the *Mavis Beacon* typing tutorial, either on computers in the Resource Room or in a separate room devoted to computer tutorial programs. These Centers also have computer tutorials to help customers improve basic skills, such as reading or

math skills. When tutorials such as Mavis Beacon are available on computers in the Resource Room, it is critical that Centers provide adequate signage and instructions so that customers are aware the program exists and have reference materials to guide them in accessing the tutorial. For example, in *Anoka*, the two computer banks in the Resource Room are labeled with large blue placards that drop from the ceiling and include a reference to "Keyboard Training."

- Providing referrals to local agencies offering computer courses. Some Centers regularly refer novice computer users to agencies or educational institutions providing free or inexpensive courses on basic computer skills. This offers individuals an opportunity to develop computer skills so that they may utilize electronic services and resources in One-Stop Centers. While this is an important referral linkage, when these agencies are located across town from the One-Stop Center there may be a lengthy delay before individuals feel prepared to use electronic resources in the Resource Room.

#### **Providing Tutorials and Workshops to Improve Computer Skills**

In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center (WDC) has an Academic Improvement Center (AIC), supported by Gateway Technical College. At the AIC, located on the first floor of the WDC adjacent to the Resource Room, customers can use individualized, self-paced tutorials to develop computer skills. Instructors are always available to help customers develop a training plan. Instructors generally have customers with very low computer skills begin by playing a computer game such as solitaire, to help them become acquainted with the mouse. The AIC has 24 computers and over 150 tutorial programs including computer tutorials such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access, and the Mavis Beacon typing tutorial. The AIC also has tutorials to help individuals develop basic reading and math skills or prepare for the GED or HSED. All services and resources in the AIC are available at no cost to universal customers.

**Having Staff Directly Assist Customers with Weak Computer Skills.** In seeking to assist customers with little computer experience, some Centers utilize staff-intensive strategies that are geared more



toward helping customers obtain benefits from electronic self-service resources in the short-term. Thus, several Centers provide intensive, one-on-one assistance to customers with little experience using computers. For example, Resource Room staff often assist customers develop a resume using a template in a software program such as *WinWay*. Centers with designated computer terminals for the state job bank system typically have staff from Job Service or Employment Security available on-site to assist customers with registration. Similarly, counselors from JTPA programs, welfare-to-work, or other programs often accompany participants into the Resource Room to provide assistance with self-services such as resume preparation software or career exploration programs. Many sites indicated that program staff with a high degree of comfort and knowledge with computers are more effective in encouraging participants to use self-directed services.

- Because many customers have low computer skills, the Career Resources Center in *Morrisville, Vermont* provides two chairs at each computer workstation so that staff can easily assist customers with accessing electronic self-services.
- In *Racine, Wisconsin*, one of the four customer service representatives in the Resource Room spends about two hours each day helping customers with low computer skills create resumes.

Another strategy Centers adopted to assist customers with limited computer skills was to essentially conduct the self-service activity on behalf of the customer by offering word processing services.

- In *Anoka, Minnesota*, for example the Workforce Center offers word processing services for customers with low computer skills. Universal customers with little experience using computers are allowed a “one-time” word-processing service, where a staff member will type a resume and cover letter. Participants in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), the state TANF program, have an identification card that entitles them to unlimited access to word processing services.

The extent to which customers develop stronger computer skills or gain a better understanding of how to use a particular self-service resource as a result of individualized assistance from a staff person

largely depends upon how this assistance is provided. Some staff members may essentially conduct the activity for the customer, whereas other staff members may provide a more detailed orientation to the self-service resource.

### **Participants in Welfare to Work Programs**

Several Centers in this study have attempted to improve utilization of self-services among participants in welfare-to-work programs, in some cases because state policy encourages or requires participants in welfare-to-work programs to conduct job search activities at One-Stop Centers. Under Massachusetts's legislation, for example, One-Stop centers serve as the primary vehicle for service delivery for welfare-to-work customers. In Wisconsin, the welfare reform program, Wisconsin Works! (W-2) is administered through the state's One-Stop system.

Many Centers conduct targeted outreach efforts to attract participants in welfare-to-work programs into the One-Stop Center. At six of the eight One-Stop Centers in this study, participants in welfare-to-work programs receive customized orientation to the self-directed services available in the Resource Room. Most commonly this includes a tour and overview of services provided at the One-Stop Center—self, assisted, and specialized services. At half of the Centers, welfare-to-work case managers are co-located at the One-Stop center and frequently assist program participants with self-services. At many Centers, welfare-to-work participants are required to document the time devoted to job search activities in the Resource Room.

#### **Examples of Promoting Access for Welfare-to-Work Participants**

*The Work Place (TWP) in Boston, Massachusetts* has an agreement with the Department of Transitional Assistance to provide career-planning services to individuals receiving public assistance. As part of their service strategy, TWP has created a separate Job Club room for welfare-to-work customers. Intended to function as a smaller, less intimidating room than the main Resource Room, this room has one computer terminal with all of the self-services and resources that are available in the Resource Room. Customers receive individualized assistance and orientation to self-services from TWP staff. As customers gain confidence in their computer skills they gradually transition into

### **Examples of Promoting Access for Welfare-to-Work Participants (continued)**

using the Resource Room. TWP has developed workshops specifically for participants in welfare-to-work programs. These workshops focus on the following topics: researching employers, an introduction to the Internet, an introduction to job search strategies, and preparing a resume and cover letters.

In *Racine, Wisconsin* the Workforce Development Center (WDC) is the only place in Racine County to register for public assistance. All county staff of Wisconsin Works! (W-2) are co-located at the WDC. According to staff of the Center, “this conceptually and physically supports the premise that public assistance is a temporary means of assistance while searching for employment.” Participants in W-2 are required to use the Resource Room as part of their job search activities. The WDC has a timeclock, discreetly located in a corner of the Resource Room, which W-2 participants use to document time spent in the Resource Room. The WDC has prepared a special packet of exercises to help familiarize W-2 participants with self-access services. These exercises provide a step-by-step guide to accessing the following resources—the registration kiosk, computer tutorials, videos, the state JobNet system, and resume preparation program.

*Some Centers work with school-to-work programs to introduce young people to tools and resources available in Resource Rooms.*

### **Youth Customers**

The extent to which “universal access” to One-Stop Centers includes youth customers varied widely across the eight sites in this study. At one extreme are Centers that conduct no outreach activities targeting youth or that discourage young people from utilizing services in the Resource Room. For example, one of the sites in our study indicated that they would like to be known as “a career center for adults only.” On the other hand, some Centers have conducted extensive outreach to youth through linkages with schools, community organizations, school-to-work systems, or JTPA youth programs. For example, the Workforce Center in *Anoka County, Minnesota* has hired a full-time staff person to coordinate outreach efforts and activities geared toward youth customers.

Most efforts to attract youth customers consist of special marketing and outreach activities. However, a few Centers have tailored service-delivery strategies to promote utilization of One-Stop services among youth by creating separate Resource Rooms for youth customers or ‘satellite’ Centers in schools or community centers.

Strategies adopted by sites in this study to promote access to the One-Stop system among youth include the following:

- *Establishing linkages with schools* to make students aware of One-Stop resources. Some Centers arrange for One-Stop staff to give presentations in schools, or they may provide teachers and counselors with information on the local One-Stop system. In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Racine Unified School District provides funding to transport students in 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades to the Workforce Development Center at least once during the year to learn about resources and services available at the Center.
- *Establishing linkages with community-based youth serving organizations* to raise awareness of One-Stop systems and the services they offer. In *Austin, Texas*, participants in a local job training program for under and unemployed youth tour the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South site) each Friday.
- *Conducting outreach efforts targeting out-of-school youth* to encourage the utilization of One-Stop services. In *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Youth Coordinator on staff at the Workforce Center works with the Assistant Principal at the local high school to identify youth that have dropped out of school and encourage them to utilize services at the Workforce Center.
- *Conducting special tours* of the One-Stop Center for young people. Many of the outreach linkages described above include arrangements for youth to tour the local One-Stop Center. These tours often emphasize that the One-Stop system serves as an important resource for young people in the present and in the future. One manager mentioned that she hoped young people would develop a “brand loyalty” to the One-Stop Center.
- *Establishing linkages with School-to-Work (STW) systems* to promote utilization of One-Stop services among students. In *Renton, Washington*, STW youth can obtain academic credit for participating in workshops on career planning and job search strategies at the Career Development Center. These workshops include an orientation to several self-services. In *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Workforce Center is the administrative agency for the county’s STW initiative.
- *Establishing satellite Centers* targeting youth

*Strategies to introduce youth customers to Resource Room services include conducting special tours and developing partnerships with local schools.*

*In one Center, high school youth can receive academic credit for participating in Center workshops on career planning.*

*Separate Resource Rooms and satellite Centers in secondary schools are additional strategies for improving access for young people.*

customers. In *Brevard County, Florida*, Job Link Centers have been established at sixteen secondary schools as part of the School-to-Work initiative. At these satellite Centers, students, teachers and parents can access education, career exploration and employment information. Computers are equipped with Internet access and they also contain Brevard's "Workforce Organizer," a binder that provides guidance around using various electronic self-access services. In *King County, Washington*, the Seattle-King County PIC received Youth Fair Chance funding to establish Career Centers at two Parks and Recreation offices. These Career Centers include a Resource Room with Internet access, other resources, and a Career Specialist staff person.

- *Creating a separate Resource Room for youth customers* to facilitate usage of self-services. In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center has created a separate 'Resource Room' for youth customers called the Career Discovery Center (CDC). The CDC has two full-time staff and fourteen computers which provide youth customers with access to education, career exploration and employment information.
- *Designating staff* to coordinate outreach and services for youth customers. In *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Workforce Center has hired a full-time Youth Coordinator who oversees the Center's School-to-Work (STW) grant and coordinates outreach and services for young people in STW programs, JTPA Title II programs as well as other out-of-school youth. As mentioned above, the *Racine, Wisconsin* Workforce Development Center has two full-time staff in the Career Discovery Center for youth customers.

### **Non-Native English Speakers**

The Centers in this study all indicated that they face numerous challenges to promoting access to self-service resources among non-native individuals. One Center Manager indicated that, although the local area has a sizable population of non-native English speakers, including individuals speaking a variety of different Asian languages, the One-Stop Center lacks the financial resources to provide adequate accommodations to promote access to self-services among this population. However, despite limited financial resources and other barriers, Centers have used the following approaches to promote utilization of self-services among non-native-English-speaking

*In some Centers, information brochures are prepared in several different languages. However, it also is important that resources and tools, beyond orientation materials, be available in multiple languages, if limited English speakers are to be reached effectively.*

customers:

- *Provide orientation resources in multiple languages.* Three Centers have been able to offer orientation materials in multiple languages.
  - In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center's three registration kiosks can be accessed in English or Spanish, using the touchscreen or voice prompt versions.
  - In *Boston, Massachusetts*, The Work Place has produced an orientation video that is available in English, Mandarin, Vietnamese, French, and Spanish.
  - Through support from the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* can provide customers with brochures on the state's One-Stop system in multiple languages.
- *Hire bilingual customer service staff.* Five Centers indicated that bilingual staff are available to assist customers in the Resource Room.
  - In *Boston, Massachusetts*, staff working in the Resource Room at The Work Place speak several different languages, including Spanish, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.
  - In *Renton, Washington*, the Career Development Center has frequently hired foreign language interpreters on a part-time basis as part of their dislocated worker rapid response efforts.
- *Provide ESL courses on-site.* Three Centers offer English as a Second Language (ESL) courses on-site. These Centers hope that offering ESL courses at the One-Stop Center will increase utilization of the Resource Room among non-native individuals.
  - In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center offers ESL and citizenship classes at no cost to universal customers through the Center's Academic Improvement Center.
  - At the Career Development Center in *Renton, Washington*, courses on English language skills are available through the Center's Adult Learning Center, but adults must meet certain

eligibility criteria.

- One of the partners of the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* offers ESL courses in the same building as the Center.

## REMOTE ACCESS

“Remote access” to electronic data occurs principally through the dedicated job matching systems (e.g., ALEX) and Internet connections. The success of these efforts can be gauged by the enormous popularity of federal, state, and local web sites, such as America’s Job Bank, which are typically accessed by individual customers from their homes or offices. In this sense, remote access is not only feasible but occurs routinely. However, Centers also attempt to make the some of the resources and tools of the Resource Rooms more accessible by using *kiosks* located in public areas or *satellite Career Centers*.

*As another way of facilitating access, Centers have also established kiosks or other remote access points, such as “mini-Centers.”*

**Kiosks.** Although kiosks may provide information about local Centers, they are generally installed and maintained by state entities rather than by operators of the Centers themselves. In some localities, kiosks have been installed in public places such as libraries (*Bloomington, Indiana* and *Austin, Texas*) or in shopping malls (*Vermont*). Although kiosks can offer convenient access to job listings and limited labor market information, as well as provide “advertising” for One-Stop Centers, several problems with kiosks have been noted, including the following:

- Kiosks tend to be more limited in terms of functionality than Internet-based systems accessible through state and other web pages.
- Kiosks often do not always offer access to up-to-date information.
- Because they are “remote” centers, this can pose difficulties in terms of maintenance and prevention of vandalism.
- Little or no staff assistance is available to persons using kiosks. In the best cases, customers can use attached telephone sets to contact local One-Stop Centers or Employment Service offices.
- Public settings where kiosks are located are often noisy and offer little privacy.

*Kiosks are typically extremely limited in functionality and for this reason are often viewed as more of a marketing tool than an actual remote access point.*

For these reasons, most state and local workforce system

respondents did not view kiosks as particularly effective. One Center director, for example, believes that because "... the whole idea of a One-Stop Center was to have customers come into the Center, using [Center] funds to establish or support out-stationed sites would run counter to the purpose of the Center." This sentiment was also reflected during discussions with state-level personnel in other locations. In Vermont, for example, one key state respondent indicated that kiosks have not been effective in attracting people to One-Stop Centers.

Part of the negative reception to kiosks in many locations may be due to their limited functionality. For example, at kiosks in Vermont and Indiana, although users can access job listings, they cannot use this information to contact employers. Rather, they must generate printouts of job orders or make notations of these listings, so that they can later contact local Employment Offices or Career Centers.

*By contrast, satellite Centers can be very effective in facilitating access, especially for special populations.*

**Satellite or Mini-Centers.** Perhaps more promising remote access options are "satellite Centers" or "mini-Career Centers." In these arrangements, a more comprehensive set of resources can be made accessible, often to specially targeted populations.

#### **Providing Effective Remote Access for Special Populations**

The Brevard Employment and Training Consortium (BETC), the operator of the county's One-Stop system, has adopted three approaches to creating satellites. These include:

*Community Commons.* At the time of the site visit to *Brevard County, Florida*, three satellite sites were located in public housing areas and one was in a social services office. The sites have small Resource Rooms with computers and Internet access; *Choices* self-assessment software; tutorials for English, math, and typing; and access to the Florida Job Information System (JIS) and a variety of other information through the Brevard local area network (LAN). These sites also have video-conference capabilities, fax and copy machines, videos, and telephones that can be used to contact employers. In addition, these sites have a small resource library that includes a career exploration section.

*Employer Mini-sites.* The *Brevard Job Link* system has established temporary sites in plants where large layoffs have taken place, funded jointly by the employer and the BETC. These outplacement sites included a resource library and staff to assist



**Providing Effective Remote Access (continued)**

job seekers. Employers contribute computers and software. Staff members are supplied by the various Centers, and laid-off workers can access all services from the temporary site. Similar efforts have been undertaken in *Renton, Washington* and *Bloomington, Indiana*.

*School-to-work sites.* As discussed above in the section on facilitating access for youth customers, in *Brevard County*, satellite resource centers have been established at sixteen secondary schools as part of the STW initiative. These Centers enable students, teachers, and parents to access education, career, and employment information.

**DOCUMENTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SELF-SERVICES SYSTEM**

Documenting the performance of a self-service system represents one of the greatest challenges facing One-Stop systems. Precisely because these services are designed as “self” services rather than mediated or intensive services, which are characterized by staff involvement, tracking the usage of self-services can be difficult and expensive. Moreover, capturing the benefits or outcomes that result from utilization of self-services is exceedingly difficult. For example, a customer may use several different self-service resources during a single visit to the Resource Room—a resume writing software program, a video on interviewing skills, and job listings on the Internet. This customer may obtain employment as a result of using self-services at the One-Stop Center, but unless tracking systems are in place, the Center cannot claim credit for this placement.

*Centers desire to document usage, customer satisfaction, and outcomes. However, doing so is extremely difficult.*

Without entirely resolving this problem, the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) represents an attempt by some states to develop multi-function MIS capabilities. As these and other efforts are pursued, some important issues that should be considered include the following:

- What are the costs associated with collecting data on (1) customer usage of self-services, (2) outcomes associated with using self-services, and (3) customer satisfaction with self-services? Do the costs associated with data collection outweigh the costs of delivering self-services?
- Will the process of data collection function as a

deterrent to usage? For example, some Centers no longer request individuals using the Resource Room to provide their social security number because many customers complained about this practice.

- What can be said with respect to the accuracy of the data? For example, are customers required to sign-in prior to using the Resource Room or specific self-services or provide identifying information? How can it be known with certainty how many or what types of customers are accessing services?
- How will the results be used? Are mechanisms in place to ensure that modifications or improvements are instituted as a result of data collected on customer usage and satisfaction?

### **Tracking Customer Usage**

All of the Centers in this study have developed mechanisms to track customer usage of various types of self-services or mediated services, such as workshops. The most common strategy was to document the amount of customer traffic in the Resource Room, by using either a sign-in sheet at a reception desk or through a computer registry.

- At the Workforce Development Center in *Bloomington, Indiana*, customers may sign-in using a hard-copy sign-in sheet, which requests their social security number, but they are not required to do so. This Center is exploring the possibility of installing an *electric eye* device at the entrance to the Information Resource Area, which would function as a less intrusive means of tracking customer usage.
- The Work Place (TWP) in *Boston, Massachusetts* provides each customer with a bar-coded membership card. As customers enter the Resource Room they are asked to “swipe” their cards through a system that tracks general usage of the Resource Room.

*Procedures to track usage include using sign-in sheets, computer logs, “electric eyes,” and computer swipe cards.*

Although documenting customer traffic in the Resource Room allows a Center to draw general conclusions about whether current resources adequately meet customer needs, the tracking system may not document which specific self-services customers utilize in the Resource Room. For example, which self-services tools and resources do customers most frequently utilize? As a means of addressing this issue, two Centers that use a computer registry system—*Austin, Texas* and *Renton, Washington*—ask customers to cite a reason for their visit

to the Center, such as using the Internet or the state JobNet system. Finally, although many Centers emphasized that staff members often assist customers in using specific self-services, which is sometimes referred to as “facilitated self-service,” none of the Centers in this study have established mechanisms to track this type of service.

**Tracking Outcomes in a Self-Service Context.** Although One-Stop systems face challenges in tracking customer usage of self-services, attempting to document the *outcomes* associated with usage of self-services represents an even greater challenge. As we mentioned above, it is extremely difficult for One-Stop Centers to establish mechanisms that “capture” the outcomes that result from using self-services, such as obtaining employment or enrolling in a training program. More ambitious efforts use Unemployment Insurance wage matching. However, because customers utilize different combinations of self-service tools and resources, as well as different combinations of self, mediated, and intensive services, it is extremely difficult to attach an outcome to a particular type of service.

Efforts to document outcomes from using self-services also raise important questions around the purpose of the Resource Room. Some of the Centers in this study emphasized that they view the One-Stop Center as an important community resource, as a provider of information that supports career exploration, for example. Thus, some customers using self-services may not be geared toward achieving specific outcomes, such as obtaining employment.

*The Boston Work Place encourages customers to contact the Center using a toll-free number, as a way of tracking outcomes.*

#### **Examples of Tracking System Performance in a Self-Service Context**

In Austin, Texas, the *Capitol of Texas Workforce Center* (South) uses a registration form to collect basic demographic information as well as “job-matching” codes based on previous employment. After initial registration, and during each subsequent visit to the Center, customers enter their social security number on a computer registry, checking services to be accessed. When they leave the Center, customers log out at the exit door and complete an exit survey. Quarterly reports, analyzing customer characteristics and Center usage, are sent to the Workforce Development Board.

At *The Work Place (TWP)* in Boston, Massachusetts, each customer registers and is given a membership card with a bar-code. The bar-code swipe-card system tracks usage of three

#### **Examples of Tracking System Performance (continued)**

general types of services—the Resource Library; participation in workshops; and participation in intensive services, such as meetings with a career specialist. As an effort to capture outcomes that may result from utilizing Center services, such as the Resource Library, TWP has recently instituted a “Finish Line” system. Customers are encouraged to contact TWP, using a toll-free telephone number, when they have obtained employment. TWP also uses a database called *Client IMS* that tracks information about members, including services used, program eligibility information, and case notes. All One-Stop centers in the state are connected to this system.

As customers enter the *Career Development Center (CDC)* in *Renton, Washington*, they are greeted by one of three staff members working at the reception desk. Whether they are new or repeat customers, individuals sign-in at a computer near the entrance, providing their name and primary reason for visiting the CDC—computer usage, Resource Library, learning centers, or appointment with a program counselor. This information is entered into a database that generates daily and monthly reports tracking the utilization of services and resources for continuous improvement purposes. The CDC also uses a Microsoft Access database to track customer participation in the CDC’s numerous workshops. While the computer registration was initially designed to collect a customer’s social security number, which would have enabled the CDC to make observations about how utilization of the Resource Room varied according to program-eligibility status, this feature was eliminated due to customer complaints.

#### **Measuring Customer Satisfaction**

Given the challenges and issues described above concerning tracking customer usage of self-services, many Centers have devoted more resources toward measuring customer satisfaction with self-service tools and resources. Results from these data collection efforts—which generally solicit information from customers around the extent to which self-services are accessible and helpful—are often used to improve access to self-services. Some Centers have developed formal surveys, which are used to gauge customer satisfaction with the Resource Room in particular or the One-Stop Center in general. Other Centers place a “suggestion box” in a prominent location in the Resource Room as an informal means of gathering customer feedback. As discussed in the example below, The Work Place in *Boston, Massachusetts* has created “continuous quality improvement teams” charged with gathering customer satisfaction data across different

*Customer satisfaction can be assessed using formal surveys or a suggestion box.*

aspects of Center operations.

In some cases, efforts to measure customer satisfaction have been initiated at the state level. In *Wisconsin*, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) conducts a random customer satisfaction survey of individuals accessing the state's JobNet system from One-Stop Career Centers, and results are shared with local Centers. Similarly, the *Minnesota* Department of Economic Security has surveyed customers regarding their satisfaction with services and resources available at One-Stop Centers. In general, customers in *Minnesota* often cited high satisfaction with staff assistance, job search tools, and the positive atmosphere at One-Stop Centers; complaints included a desire for more computers and extended hours. Statewide customer satisfaction initiatives have also been implemented in *Indiana* and *Vermont*.

#### **Examples of Efforts to Measure Customer Satisfaction**

In *Boston, Massachusetts*, *The Work Place* (TWP) has implemented "continuous quality improvement" (CQI) principles in several ways. First, TWP has created a series of CQI teams composed of management and line staff. Each team is responsible for addressing issues related to Center operations, based upon feedback gathered from customers. For example, a CQI team recently conducted a project that included administering a customer satisfaction survey regarding the existing periodicals, reference books, and other hard-copy resources available in the Resource Library. The team used the survey results to determine which journals should be discontinued because customers rarely use them and which additional periodicals should be available in the Resource Library due to strong customer interest. Additional aspects of Center operations that have been reviewed and modified by CQI teams include the reception area and the process for orientating customers to the Resource Room.

The *Capitol of Texas Workforce Center* (South) in *Austin, Texas* solicits customer satisfaction information through a couple of different survey instruments. As customers leave the Center they are asked to complete an "exit survey." The survey, which is available in English and Spanish, includes questions pertaining to customer satisfaction around the courteousness and helpfulness of Center staff, the usefulness of the information they received, and overall satisfaction with the Center (using a four-point scale). The Center has also developed a one-page customer satisfaction survey. The survey asks twelve general questions regarding the

**Efforts to Measure Customer Satisfaction (continued)**

services and staff assistance available at the Center and also asks customers to provide feedback regarding the extent to which they were satisfied with different types of services (e.g. brochures, Internet, computer lab, job search workshops). The Center has used results from these customer satisfaction surveys to improve access to Center services and resources. For example, the Center decided to offer extended hours as a result of customer feedback.